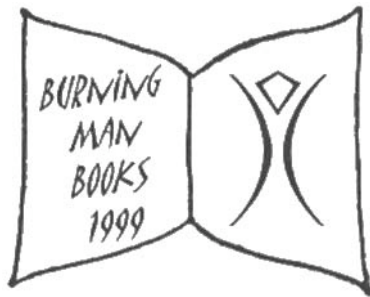


BEAUTY CROWDS ME TILL I DIE:



Selections from
the Poems of
Emily Dickinson

Edited by
Ray Soulard, Jr. & Mio Cohen

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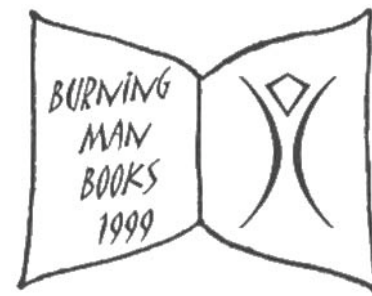


S C R I P T O R P R E S S

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number three

You may find your answer among the following pages.

BEAUTY CROWDS ME TILL I DIE:
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These are the days when Birds come back —
A very few — a Bird or two —
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies resume
The old — old sophistries of June —
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh fraud that cannot cheat the Bee —
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief.

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear —
And softly thro' the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf.

Oh Sacrament of summer days,
Oh Last Communion in the Haze —
Permit a child to join.

Thy sacred emblems to partake —
They consecrated bread to take
And thine immortal wine!

“Hope” is the thing with feathers —
 That perches in the soul —
 And sings the tune without the words —
 And never stops — at all —

And sweetest — in the Gale — is heard —
 And sore must be the storm —
 That could abash the little Bird
 That kept so many warm —

I've heard it in the chilliest land —
 And on the strangest Sea —
 Yet, never, in Extremity,
 It asked a crumb — of me.

There's a certain Slant of light,
 Winter Afternoons —
 That oppresses, like the Heft
 Of Cathedral Tunes —

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us —
 We can find no scar,
 But internal difference,
 Where the Meanings, are —

None may teach it — Any —
 'Tis the Seal Despair —
 An imperial affliction
 Sent us of the Air —

When it comes, the Landscape listens —
 Shadows — hold their breath —
 When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
 On the look of Death —

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
 And Mourners to and fro
 Kept treading — treading — till it seemed
 That Sense was breaking through —

And when they all were seated,
 A Service, like a Drum —
 Kept beating — beating — till I thought
 My Mind was going numb —

And then I heard them lift a Box
 And creak across my Soul
 With those same Boots of Lead, again,
 Then Space — began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,
 And Being, but an Ear,
 And I, and Silence, some strange Race
 Wrecked, solitary, here —

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
 And I dropped down, and down —
 And hit a World, at every plunge,
 And Finished knowing — then —

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church —
 I keep it, staying at Home —
 With a Bobolink for a Chorister —
 And an Orchard, for a Dome —

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice —
 I just wear my Wings —
 And instead of tolling the Bell, for Church,
 Our little Sexton — sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman —
 And the sermon is never long,
 So instead of getting to Heaven, at least —
 I'm going, all along.

Why make it doubt — it hurts it so —
 So sick — to guess —
 So strong — to know —
 So brave — upon its little Bed
 To tell the very last They said
 Unto Itself — and smile — And shake —
 For that dear — distant — dangerous — Sake —
 But — the Instead — the Pinching fear
 That Something — it did do — or dare —
 Offend the Vision — and it flee —
 And They no more remember me —
 Nor ever turn to tell me why —
 Oh, Master, This is Misery —

I heard a Fly buzz — when I died —
 The Stillness in the Room
 Was like the Stillness in the Air —
 Between the Heaves of Storm —

The Eyes around — had wrung them dry —
 And Breaths were gathering firm
 For that last Onset — when the King
 Be witnessed — in the Room —

I willed my Keepsakes — Signed away
 What portion of me be
 Assignable — and then it was
 There interposed a Fly —

With Blue — uncertain stumbling Buzz —
 Between the light — and me —
 And then the Windows failed — and then
 I could not see to see —

This World is not Conclusion.
 A Species stands beyond —
 Invisible, as Music —
 But positive, as Sound —
 It beckons, and it baffles —
 Philosophy — don't know —
 And through a Riddle, at the last —
 Sagacity, must go —
 To guess it, puzzles scholars —
 To gain it, Men have borne
 Contempt of Generations
 And Crucifixion, shown —
 Faith slips — and laughs, and rallies —
 Blushes, if any see —
 Plucks at a twig of Evidence —
 And asks a Vane, the way —
 Much Gesture, from the Pulpit —
 Strong Hallelujahs roll —
 Narcotics cannot still the Tooth
 That nibbles at the soul —

We learned the Whole of Love —
 The Alphabet — the Words —
 A Chapter — then the mighty Book —
 Then — Revelation closed —

But in Each Other's eyes
 An Ignorance beheld —
 Diviner than the Childhood's —
 And each to each, a Child —

Attempted to expound
 What Neither — understood —
 Alas, that Wisdom is so large —
 And Truth — so manifold!

Forever — is composed of Nows —
 'Tis not a different time —
 Except for Infiniteness —
 And Latitude of Home —

From this — experienced Here —
 Remove the Dates — to These —
 Let Months dissolve in further Months —
 And Years — exhale in Years —

Without Debate — or Pause —
 Or Celebrated Days —
 No different Our Years would be
 From Anno Domini's —

The Brain — is wider than the Sky —
 For — put them side by side —
 The one the other will contain
 With ease — and You — beside —

The Brain is deeper than the sea —
 For — hold them — Blue to Blue —
 The one the other will absorb —
 As Sponges — Buckets — do —

The Brain is just the weight of God —
 For — Heft them — Pound for Pound —
 And they will differ — if they do —
 As Syllable from Sound —

A Thought went up my mind today —
 That I have had before —
 But did not finish — some way back —
 I could not fix the Year —

Nor where it went — nor why it came
 The second time to me —
 Nor definitely, what it was —
 Have I the Art to say —

But somewhere in my Soul — I know —
 I've met the Thing before —
 It just reminded me — 'twas all —
 And came my way no more —

Because I could not stop for Death —
 He kindly stopped for me —
 The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove — He knew no haste
 And I had put away
 My labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility —

We passed the School, where Children strove
 At Recess — in the Ring —
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain —
 We passed the Setting Sun —

Or rather — He passed Us —
 The Dews drew quivering and chill —
 For only Gossamer, my Gown —
 My Tippet — only Tulle —

We paused before a House that seemed
 A Swelling of the Ground —
 The roof was scarcely visible —
 The Cornice — in the Ground —

Since then — 'tis Centuries — and yet
 Feels shorter than the Day
 I first surmised the Horses' Heads
 Were toward Eternity —

Presentiment — is that long Shadow — on the Lawn —
 Indicative that Suns go down —

The Notice to the startled Grass
 That Darkness — is about to pass —

Ample make this Bed —
 Make this Bed with Awe —
 In it wait till Judgment break
 Excellent and Fair.

Be its Mattress straight —
 Be its Pillow round —
 Let no Sunrise' yellow noise
 Interrupt this Ground —

I stepped from Plank to Plank
 A slow and cautious way
 The Stars about my Head I felt
 About my Feet the Sea.

I knew not but the next
 Would be my final inch —
 This gave me that precarious Gait
 Some call Experience.

I felt a Cleaving in my Mind —
 As if my Brain had split —
 I tried to match it — Seam by Seam —
 But could not make them fit.

The thought behind, I strove to join
 Unto the thought before —
 But Sequence unravelled out of Sound
 Like Balls — upon a Floor.

1287

In this short Life
That only lasts an hour
How much — how little — is
Within our power

1354

The Heart is the Capital of the Mind —
The Mind is a single State —
The Heart and the Mind together make
A single Continent —

One — is the Population —
Numerous enough —
This ecstatic Nation
Seek — it is Yourself.

So gay a Flower
Bereaves the Mind
As if it were a Woe —
Is Beauty an Affliction — then?
Tradition ought to know —

The Butterfly upon the Sky,
That doesn't know its Name
And hasn't any tax to pay
And hasn't any Home
Is just as high as you and I,
And higher, I believe,
So soar away and never sigh
And that's the way to grieve —

To see her is a Picture —
To hear her is a Tune —
To know her an Intemperance
As innocent as June —
To know her not — Affliction —
To own her for a Friend
A warmth as near as if the Sun
Were shining in your Hand.

Beauty crowds me till I die
Beauty mercy have on me
But if I expire today
Let it be in sight of thee —

To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.